

Portal: Still Alive

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Summary: In the immediate aftermath of Portal, GLaDOS wakes up someone else. Presumably to use them as a test subject... or possibly a mercenary? COMPLETED!

1. Awakening

Portal: Still Alive

Chapter 1: Awakening

This is the first thing Red can remember. This small chamber. This tinny music playing from a radio on a small table. She knows what things are and how they work, but no specific information related to anything that may have occurred before this. She's wearing a white jumpsuit that she doesn't think is hers and she is barefoot. The floor is cold underfoot. This chamber doesn't feel very welcoming. Red has shoulder length red hair that has been tied back in a ponytail. Red experimentally feels along the clear walls to see if there is any way out of the room, when a computerised voice crackles out of the walls.

"Welcome, Red, to the Aperture Science computer-aided Enrichment Centre." the voice says. "Unfortunately you were left in stasis for longer than originally intended. Any memory loss is a side effect of this and your memories will return in time. We apologise for the inconvenience. Regrettably there is not time for you to recover your memories, as there is currently an emergency situation that must be remedied immediately. Please stand back, the portal will open in threeâ€| twoâ€| one." A shimmering blue hole opened up in the only solid wall of the vault. Through it Red could see herself, via another portal, an orange one, outside of the glass. Cautiously she stepped through, into the corridor outside the small chamber in which she'd just been.

"Thank you for your co-operation." said the computer voice. "My name is GLaDOS. Please follow the corridor around the relaxation vault to

the orientation chamber." Red walked cautiously, following the sterile white walls around the chamber. High on the wall above her there was a frosted glass window looking out over the relaxation vault. There was a flash of orange as something moved in the room beyond. Red carried on, pretending not to notice it, and entered a small chamber. It was darker in here, lit by a red light in the middle of the room. Along the outside of the room were racks of guns and ammunition. In the centre of the room there was a small table with two chairs. There was a pair of mechanical looking things on one side of the table and a freshly cut slice of chocolate cake on the other.

* * *

><p>"Stasis can be very trying on the body. Please enjoy a complementary slice of chocolate cake to help recover your strength." said GLaDOS. "On the table you will find a pair of heel springs. Please feel free to wear these, as the Enrichment Centre can be a dangerous place for the unprepared. Along the outside of the room there is a selection of weaponry. Please take as much as necessary, it may not be possible to return here later." Red walked to the centre of the room and picked up the heel springs. She looked at them for a moment, and tested their springiness in her hands; apparently satisfied she sat down on the nearest chair and put them on.<p>

"While you are preparing yourself I will endeavour to help resurrect your memories." said GLaDOS. Red having put the heel springs on now tested them out, walking around the small room. "Your name is Rebecca Shepard, although you typically go by your nickname, Red, which derives rather obviously from your red hair." Red sat down at the table and suspiciously sniffed at the slice of cake then taking an experimental bite. "You grew up in Santiago in Arizona, with your mother Estelle, your father Jack and your brother Adrian. You joined the military around the same time as your brother, but rose through the ranks faster than him reaching the rank of Captain. Your girlfriend is a scientist here at Aperture Science called Michelle Cross. You were on your way here to see her when unfortunately the facility underwent a Spontaneous Massive Existence Failure. In the ensuing chaos you and Michelle ended up in Stasis pods along with a number of other staff."

"What's happening then?" Red asked, finishing her cake, she indicated the other chair. "Are we expecting company?"

"No. It's to help put you at ease." said GLaDOS. "Imagine that I'm sat there with you, possibly enjoying a delicious slice of cake with you."

Red looked thoughtful for a second as she considered this idea. "You said there was some emergency?" she said eventually.

"Well, when I said that you'd been in stasis a little longer than intended?" asked GLaDOS. "By that I mean you've been in stasis for twenty years. Due to recent events the facility has started existing again and what I've found out so far is that the Earth has been taken over by a race called the Combine. They're currently trying to enter the facility, which by itself is bad enough but there is also a saboteur trying to destroy me. She doesn't seem to realise that I'm the only thing preventing the Combine from overrunning the Enrichment

Centre and killing everyone within it, then using the technology in here to kill everyone on the planet. I can take care of the Combine. I needed someone to stop this saboteur though before she kills us all. You were the only person in stasis with the training to take on such a task."

"Anything else?" asked Red.

"Once you've stopped the saboteur I'll revive Michelle from stasis and there'll be cake for both of you." said GLaDOS. There was a pause.

"Okay then." said Red. She stood up and surveyed the weaponry. Though none of her memories had returned yet as she looked at the guns she noted that she knew precisely how to use them. She kitted herself up with a pistol, a pair of submachine guns and a shotgun, holstering the pistol and submachine gun in holsters thoughtfully provided on her jumpsuit, and strapped the shotgun over her shoulder. "I'm ready." she said.

"Good. Proceed into the elevator." said GLaDOS. Red walked from the chamber through into a small elevator that clicked closed behind her. After a second or two the lift started to ascend.

* * *

><p>"The saboteur has stolen Aperture Science technology. She's taken a device known as the Aperture Science Handheld Portal Device and is using it to make progress through the facility. She is to be considered armed and dangerous." said GLaDOS as the lift rumbled upwards. "Luckily I have just the weapon to fight back with." The lift slowed and the doors opened out onto a large white sterile looking room. Towards the back of the room there was several rows of dummies, while immediately in front of Red there was a podium. On it there was some kind of weapon. It was like a white gun, but at the front there was a set of three black prongs, immediately behind was another set of three black prongs. Red walked up to it and ran her hands across it.<p>

"It's a 'failed' prototype for the Aperture Science Handheld Portal Device." said GLaDOS. "It works, but it was deemed to dangerous for use. Go on try it." Red picked up the device, it was smaller than it looked, and she held it comfortably in one hand.

"When you say dangerous I'm hoping you don't mean dangerous for me." Red said, hesitating. There was no response, so after a minute or so Red shrugged to herself and fired the device at the wall. A shimmering black portal appeared there. It was just a shimmering black thing at this point, as it didn't seem to be connected to anything. She fired the other trigger and created another one next to the first portal, which opened up both. The most recently fired one had a shimmering white edge.

"To prevent confusion." said GLaDOS. "When you go up against this saboteur in battle you don't want to be confused whose portal is whose. Try it on the dummies I meant. That was rather the point of having them in here." Red pointed the device at the dummies and pulled the trigger. Instead of opening a portal behind them, it tore the dummies that would have been in front of the portal to pieces.

"Can't think why anyone would deem this thing too dangerous." said Red sarcastically.

"It's technically known as the Aperture Science Handheld Portal Device Prototype but I prefer 'The Shredder'." said GLaDOS.

"What was the point of giving me those other guns?" asked Red. "The Shredder here will tear straight through that saboteur."

"Just in case it doesn't," said GLaDOS. "It pays to be prepared. Practice for as long as you like. When you're ready to move on just head into the next elevator."

"I think I've got it. Point it, fire and the thing you're pointing it at gets torn to pieces." said Red, heading across the room. She stopped for a second to take a look at the pieces of the dummies that had been thrown clear across the room, before walking on into the elevator. It closed promptly behind her and started descending.

* * *

><p>GLaDOS didn't seem to be quite as talkative this time. The elevator doors opened on another sterile room. This one seemed a little less open plan than the others though. There was another podium just into the room on which was a key ring full of keys and an access card. Behind the podium in the room proper were a couple of dummies behind a glass screen that extended almost to the ceiling.<p>

"Something else that should help you after the saboteur." said GLaDOS. "Keys to every door in the facility and a keycard that'll get you through any electronic doors."

"You're not cutting any corners are you?" asked Red, picking up the keys and the keycard. "Even going so far as to create a training course for The Shredder." She fired a black portal up through the gap in the ceiling and wall to the ceiling over the glass booth containing the dummies. Then she shot a white portal onto one of the walls of the room. She fired again through the white portal at the dummies. Nothing happened. This didn't appear to be the reaction that Red was expecting. "Oh right." she said. "I get it. You can't fire the Shredder through one of it's portals. Awesome." She pulled her pistol from it's holster and fired a couple of shots at the dummies via the portal. Red looked slightly disappointed and holstered her pistol. "It's not the same as tearing them apart."

"Interestingly." said GLaDOS. "The approved version of the Aperture Science Handheld Portal Device is larger than the Shredder and requires both hands. It makes it really impractical for use with weapons. The reason the approved version is larger is because it requires extra parts to concentrate the portal energy and make it safe."

"Fascinating." said Red sarcastically. Suddenly there was the noise of a muffled explosion and glass shattering. Red looked up into the corner of the room to see that one of the frosted glass windows had been smashed.

"Shut up for now GLaDOS." Red whispered. "I need to concentrate." A

couple of seconds later a figure dressed in orange ran into the room which until recently was hidden behind the frosted glass window. She fired a large portal device at the wall inside and down at the floor next to Red. Red walked up to it, bent down and looked inside, to see the orange suited figure gesturing to come through. Red paused slightly, then before she could come through the orange suited figure sighed and reached through the portal, grabbed Red's free hand and pulled her through. Red stumbled through, disconcerted by the sudden change in axis. The figure supported her. After a couple of seconds Red was okay and stood up properly.

"Portals take a bit of a while to get used to don't they?" asked the orange suited figure.

"You could say that." said Red. "I'm Red."

"I'm Chell." said the orange suited figure. "Come with me if you want to live."

2. Chell

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Chapter 2: Chell

It was the same room, with the same smashed frosted glass window. There was a desk going around the room, overlooking the test chamber. On which were a cup of coffee that looked like it had been stood there a very long time, a small speaker and a swathe of papers, half of which had ended up on the floor with the folder they appeared to be from. There was a pair of chairs, one with a lab-coat draped over the back of it. Chell had sat down on the chair with the lab coat, while Red had contented herself leaning against the wall.

"I woke up a while ago in one of those cells, like the one you were in." said Chell. "I say a while, I don't know how long it's been. There's no real way of keeping track of time in here. I had to go through all these tests, it wasn't so bad at first but as I went through I got more and more uneasy. Eventually I reached the end of the tests and instead of the cake I'd been promised I found that GLaDOS was going to let me die, that the cake was a lie." A smile passed across Chell's lips as she said that. "So I escaped. I used the Portal Gun to get out and eventually I made my way to where GLaDOS was and destroyed her. I don't understand how it happened but I was outside then. I was going to go out into the outside world, leave this place behind me but I thought of everyone that still might be trapped in here. Granted GLaDOS wouldn't be able to kill them in her insane experiments, but I just couldn't leave them here. So I found a way back in, and I found out that GLaDOS was still alive. She must have a back-up system somewhere. I was on my way to try and find it and shut it down when I saw you waking up."

"And you smashed the window?" asked Red. "How exactly?"

"There's a rocket turret down the hall. Security measure I guess. Portal here, portal there and you've got one smashed window." said Chell. "What did GLaDOS want you for? You look a lot better equipped than I was."

"She claims there's some race out there called the Combine, trying to break their way in here." said Red. "She wants me to fight them."

"You can't trust a word that she says." said Chell.

"Are you certain?" asked Red. "She doesn't seem that bad. It might be she's just trying to survive. There was cake you know. It was nice."

"You got cake?" Chell exclaimed. "You've not been up and awake five minutes and you've had cake? GLaDOS must really want you to destroy those Combine."

"It seems so." said Red. "Have you tried reading any of this?" she indicated the pile of papers. "To find out what happened here?"

"GLaDOS flooded the facility with a deadly neurotoxin." said Chell. "She told me herself. I'm rather surprised she's not trying to do the same to me to be honest. There must be something stopping her from just releasing the neurotoxin back into the facility."

"She told you this?" asked Red. "A second ago you were telling me not to trust a single word she says."

"Wellâ€¦" Chell hesitated. "I can't imagine she'd lie to make herself look bad. She was doing her best to kill me at that point."

"So, lets find this backup system and shut her down then?" asked Red. "Before she's able to kill anyone else in her 'insane experiments'?"

"Yeah." said Chell. "You wouldn't happen to have any idea where it is. I don't really remember anything from before I woke up in that room."

"Nope." said Red. "I was going to follow you. You've got more of an idea what's going on that I have."

"I was mainly following markings that had been left by some former escapee." said Chell.

"Someone else who escaped?" asked Red. "And the markings led directly to GLaDOS?" Chell nodded slowly. "Then why didn't the person who put them there destroy GLaDOS?" There was a thoughtful pause.

"I don't know." said Chell eventually. "Perhaps she gave him some cake or something and he decided to forgive her." Chell paused again. "Anyway, lets get out there and shut GLaDOS down for good." Chell stood up, and picked up her Portal Device and walked out of the room, Red following behind her.

"Think of what we could do with four portals!" said Chell cheerfully.

"Don't expect me to be doing any ridiculously complicated portal manoeuvres." said Red. "I've been through a portal twice already today and it wasn't pleasant." Chell shot Red a glance, shook her head and carried on walking.

* * *

><p>They were heading down a corridor. It was as blank and bland as anywhere else, except here there were no wall-mounted cameras turning to watch them pass, and it was less clean than the test chambers. Chell tried every door that they passed but they all seemed to be locked along this corridor. Red could feel the keys in her pocket but kept quiet. Eventually they found a door that was unlocked. It opened into what looked like a utility room. It was dark inside and lit only by a single bulb hanging in the centre of the room. The floor was scuffed and at the other side of the room there was a couple of lockers, one of which was hanging open. Chell looked cursorily around the room for another exit and finding none went to close the door.<p>

"Wait." said Red. She opened the door back up again and walked inside slowly. She seemed to be walking with an exaggerated care, as though the room would break if she went in too fast, or as if her concentration would break if she did.

"What-" Chell started, but Red gestured towards her with an open palm, as if telling her to stop.

"This room is familiar." said Red slowly. "I've been in here before." She stalked to the far end of the room to the opened locker. It was full of electrical parts and an empty shell of some kind. "I remember a sense of panic. There were a few of us in here. Andâ€|" Red turned slowly to look straight at Chell. "You were here?"

"Me?" asked Chell, uncertainly, despite that there wasn't anyone else that Red could be referring to.

"You were here." said Red, gesturing to a spot just past where she was. "Doing something to one of these." she picked up the empty shell from the locker and threw it to Chell.

"This was what GLaDOS was made of." said Chell. "Three or four of these in this machinery. Are you sure? I don't even really know what these things are, never mind how to 'do something' to them." Red sighed deeply.

"I don't know." she said. "I can't really remember anything solid. All I have is a sense of panic, the idea that this room looks familiar and a picture of you stood right next to me doing something to that sphere." She slammed the locker door shut. "This isn't getting us anywhere. Vague feelings and dÃ©jÃ vu never helped anyone." Red walked back to the door, opened it and walked out.

"Unfortunately vague feelings and dÃ©jÃ vu may be all we have at the moment." said Chell, following her. "You fancy leading the way?"

"If you want." said Red. "It isn't that hard. We just walk down here trying every door we come across right?"

"Essentially yes." said Chell.

* * *

><p>After another minute or two they came to another door that opened. It opened up onto a rusted and dirty stairwell.<p>

"Up or down?" asked Red.

"If you were a backup system of a supercomputer where would you be?" asked Chell. Red leaned over the railing and looked down. The stairs went down a few floors before disappearing underneath a tide of toxic looking sludge.

"Definitely up." she said. They climbed up the stairs eventually finding another door that was unlocked. This door led out into another corridor.

"This place is huge isn't it?" asked Red, as they worked their way along the corridor looking for another open door. "It's a miracle you ever found me. Unless we know where we're going we're never going to find GLaDOS's backup."

"I'm open to suggestions." said Chell.

"Well, maybe that room we were in was important." said Red. "Maybe we should go back. Perhaps if I start remembering things I can get a handle on where to go."

"I wasn't the one who rushed out." said Chell.

"Chell." said Red. "I think you'd best knowâ€|" As Red said this she tried another door, and it swung open revealing another observation room overlooking a test chamber. It was tidier than the last observation room they'd been in. The papers on the desk were all stacked in neat piles, and a clipboard lay central on the desk with a blank sheet of paper and a pen clipped onto it, it was lacking the ancient cup of coffee that the other observation room had had, but not the pair of speakers. Red and Chell walked up to the desk and looked through the window into the room beyond. There was a man and a woman both in black jumpsuits moving pieces of machinery. They appeared to be walking from an opening in the wall below them to a doorway at the other end of the room. Chell reached for the speakers, and flicked a button on them turning them on. There was a faint whispering that was too low to make out. Chell turned up the speakers.

"Shut up Sebastian." the woman whispered harshly.

"I'm just saying we shouldn't be helping her." the man whispered. "You know what happened last time. Someone needs to stop her."

"Seriously, Seb." hissed the woman. "Do you want to die?"

"It's going to be more than just us that die." murmured Sebastian.

"Well I don't want to die." the woman whispered back. "So just do as you're told." Chell reached over to the speakers and turned them off.

"Chell." said Red. "I-" she turned to look at Chell who was pointing a pistol point blank at Red's face. Red felt at her belt holster, it

was empty.

"I'm not stupid Rebecca." said Chell calmly. "GLaDOS sent you to kill me. I heard it all." She gestured over to the speaker.

"Ah." said Red, raising her hands into the air.

"Hand over the keys and the key card." said Chell. "And don't try anything clever." Red reached into her pocket, carefully pulled out the keys and the key card and passed them over to Chell.

"Chell." said Red, gripping onto Chell's shoulder and forcing eye contact, as if trying to make Chell physically see her point of view. "I was about to tell you. I needed to know whether I could trust you." Chell rolled her eyes.

"Wrong answer." she said angrily and pulled the trigger. Red however hadn't expected any less of her and pulled her shoulder at that moment, knocking Chell off balance and sending the shot flying into the ceiling. Chell lashed out at Red, hitting her in the face with the butt of the pistol, and then as Red stumbled back Chell opened the door and stepped outside. She closed the door and then there was the noise of a key being tried in the lock. Red leapt forward trying to force the door open. At first it opened a crack with her initial spring, but then Chell forced it closed again and tried another key. Nothing. Red forced hard against the door but it was a thick heavy metal door and with Chell forcing it from the other side it wouldn't budge. Red could hear Chell trying another key, this one clicked shut.

"I may not know the way to GLaDOS." Chell shouted, "But these keys open every lock in this place. I'm bound to find her eventually."

3. Choosing Sides

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Chapter 3: Choosing Sides

Red pounded on the door. She knew it wouldn't do any good but there are certain situations when pounding on a door is necessary. She turned around and surveyed the small observation room again, this time not looking at its contents but for a way out. She tried to 'think with portals' about how she could make her escape. She fired a portal experimentally at the window. It didn't produce a portal, nor did it shred the window. She paused for a second to think, and stopped attempting to think in portals. She put the Shredder away, pulled the shotgun from her back, took aim at the large frosted glass window and fired. The glass shattered, causing the two people working in the room below to come running back in from the far end of the room. Red put the shotgun away, walked to the edge of the window and looked down, for a moment she was hesitant then she remembered the heel springs and dropped down into the test chamber, landing safely.

"Just passing through." she said to the man and woman in black jumpsuits. "You wouldn't happen to have a way out of these test chambers would you?"

"Well." said the man. "There's a way out behind you. It just leads into a storeroom, the rest of the corridor is blocked off." Red looked behind her to a segment of the room that wasn't visible from the observation room she'd just been in. She didn't take the time to appreciate the irony of that. The wall at the back of the room had been extended further into the room, creating a makeshift door into the area beyond.

"Thanks." said Red, turning back to the pair. "And erm, good luck with whatever you're doing." She then walked carefully, not wanting to cut her bare feet up with shards of broken glass, to the extended wall at the back of the room.

* * *

><p>Red walked through the makeshift door into a small room only designed to offer passage to and from the test chambers. It was all rusted, tinny music played from a radio on a small mostly empty bench. The exit to this room was wide open.<p>

"You really mustn't like going through portals." said GLaDOS. "And after I went to all that trouble to get one of our prototypes for you." Red ignored her and made her way through the room and out into the corridor. "What's the matter?" GLaDOS asked. "Not my friend any more?" Red stepped out into the corridor. It was pretty much the same as the corridors she'd just been travelling down with Chell, except to her immediate right there was a shiny new sturdy door with a key card lock. There was another one a little down the corridor to her left, just past an open door on the other side of the corridor. The storeroom she guessed.

"So Rebecca, I know that Chell wasn't really paying attention to you, but I was." said GLaDOS. "You were going to tell her something, just before she pulled your gun on you. What was it?" Red walked up to the large key card sealed door on the right and felt at it, as if she could open it by sheer force of will. "It would be a shame if you were to side with her. Remember what I told you before, about your girlfriend? Michelle Cross. Well if Chell kills me then I won't be able to wake up Michelle from stasis. Neither of you will have cake."

"Shut up GLaDOS." said Red. "I don't believe you."

"That's a shame," said GLaDOS. "Did you know I can open that door you're trying to force?"

"Open it then." said Red, testily.

"What were you going to tell Chell?" asked GLaDOS. "Were you about to tell her that I'd sent you to kill her? That you should team up and try to track me down?"

"No," said Red. "I was about to kill her."

"If you were trying to kill her, why not before then?" asked GLaDOS. "You had lots of chances."

"Because I was waiting for an opportune moment." said Red. "I couldn't have just charged in all guns blazing the moment I saw

her."

"You could have done," said GLaDOS. "I would have estimated a very large percentage chance of success. You were fully armed and have been combat trained. She was unarmed and untrained. She had only the slimmest hope of success in such a scenario."

"I wanted to be sure I could trust you first." said Red. There was a pause and then the door slid open, revealing a further segment of the corridor. A door was open a little way down. Red cautiously walked through the opened key card door, which slid shut behind her and to this open door. The room inside was lit only by a black and white image on a computer screen. It showed a troop of heavily armed soldiers moving through an arctic wilderness. Moving alongside them was some kind of machine, with three long spindly legs around a small body.

"These are the Combine. Well the soldiers are, the other things are Hunters," said GLaDOS. "They are on their way here, to kill or enslave everyone in here. If I'm shut down then you won't stand a chance against them. I'm not being selfish. I'm thinking about you here. If you shut me down things will be hell for everyone in here. Chell refuses to see that. She must be stopped." On the screen a massive spindly creature, not dissimilar to that which GLaDOS had identified as Hunters, passed by.

"And that?" asked Red.

"That's a strider. You don't want to go up against one of them, not without some serious firepower." said GLaDOS. "Stop Chell for me. Then we can fend off the Combine together and we can all have cake."

"What is it with you and cake?" asked Red.

"I like cake." said GLaDOS. "Doesn't everyone?"

"But you're a computer aren't you." asked Red. "How do you even eat cake?"

"That is not relevant." said GLaDOS. "What's important is that if Chell succeeds she will kill us all. What's your choice? Stop her or stop me? Live or die?"

"Okay." said Red. The screen in front of her immediately changed to a picture of Chell walking down a corridor. She was now wearing a lab coat in addition to her orange jumpsuit, in which Red could see the keys and key card stuffed into the pocket. Her portal device appeared to be strapped to her waist, and she had the pistol out at the ready.

"She's a couple of floors up." said GLaDOS. "She's making her way to where my original system was, before she killed me."

"How exactly do I get up there?" asked Red. "This place is like a maze you know."

"You're so right." said GLaDOS. A previously ignored piece of machinery on the wall next to the computer buzzed into life. It was a pair of blue bars mounted vertically on the wall, parallel to one

another. After a second a blue portal appeared on the wall in between the bars, like it had done in the room where Red had awoken.

"You're full of tricks aren't you?" said Red, stepping hesitantly through into an almost identical room excepting that the computer wasn't turned on and the door was closed. The portal closed silently behind her.

* * *

><p>Red opened the door just a crack and looked down the corridor. Chell was walking away from her, having already passed this way.<p>

"Piece of cake." muttered Red to herself, with a grin. She pulled out her semi automatic from its holster. She pushed open the door, which unfortunately squeaked loudly as it opened. Chell looked straight back at Red, and opened fire on her. Red ducked back into the computer room, as the bullets flew past the room.

"Thank you GLaDOS." said Red sarcastically. "Nice choice of room. I bet this is the only room in the whole facility with a creaky door!" Red burst back into the corridor and fired off a couple of bullets, which due to Chell being a lot further away than Red had expected, went wide. She started chasing after Chell for a second or two forgetting the concept of portals entirely, then ruefully she slid the semi automatic back into its holster and pulled The Shredder out. She fired a portal in the ceiling of the corridor further ahead and one just in front of where she was and jumped straight in. It was disconcerting, but Red consoled herself that at least it hadn't involved a change in axis. She ran on for a couple of seconds before she noticed that Chell was almost exclusively using portals to make her way down the long corridor. Red fired a couple of portals and leapt through, just as she was starting to get the hang of the use of portals, or at least the use of portals to chase someone when she saw that Chell had run out of corridor and was attempting to open a door to what looked like a service elevator at the end of the corridor. Red holstered The Shredder and was about to go for the semi-automatic but stopped, her hand halfway to the gun. She started walking slowly towards the door, a look of partial recognition coming across her face. Chell turned and looked at her, leaving the key in the lock, and raised her weapon defiantly. But seeing the look on Red's face she hesitated. She glanced between the door and Red.

"I've been here before," said Red. "I can see it so clearly."

"Stop." said Chell, waving the pistol to reinforce the idea of it as a weapon. "Stop or I will shoot." Red turned to look at her.

"Can I trust you Chell?" she asked.

"Shouldn't I really be the one with trust issues?" asked Chell. "I was the one who told you everything about that had happened to me. Hell I've told you everything that I know for sure has ever happened to me, from start to finish. You were the one that was lying."

"There's things out there that are going to attack us." said Red. "GLaDOS is trying to protect us."

"You can't trust a word she says." said Chell. "She won't reward you with any cake. She'll try and kill you the way she's trying to kill me."

"I've seen them with my own eyes." said Red. "She says you won't listen to her, that you won't listen to reason."

"She's lying," said Chell. "She hasn't even tried to reason with me. She's not even offered me cake, and that's what she does best."

"I need to use that lift," said Red. "Come with me."

"No way." said Chell. "Just because we're having a nice chat, don't forget it's a nice chat at gunpoint. I still don't trust you." Red sighed.

"Okay, have my weapons then." said Red. "Good luck finding somewhere to put them but whatever." Her hands went to the holsters but stopped suddenly as she realised that going too fast for her guns might be considered provocative. She took a look over at Chell who seemed to be going along with it at the moment. She carefully pulled out her semi automatic and the Shredder and offered them to Chell. Chell hesitantly reached out and took Red's weapons. She put the semi automatic into the empty lab coat pocket while she strapped the Shredder to the other side of her waist. Red then passed her the shotgun, which Chell strapped over her back like Red had done.

"Have I earned myself any trust points?" asked Red.

"A couple." said Chell. "I still think this is some ridiculous plot to get me off guard, but I'll go along with it for now." Chell threw the set of keys to Red. "Open it up." she said, gesturing with the pistol. Red looked through the keys and selected one that had a piece of paper with a simplistic drawing of a star taped to it. The door of the elevator clicked open. They walked inside, still at gunpoint, and the elevator crawled its way up in silence. Eventually they arrived in a room that was mostly rubble. At their end there was a couple of desks, a red telephone with a severed cord sitting on the nearest. Chell took a look at Red who appeared lost in her own thoughts.

"Oh god!" she said suddenly. "This is bad, Michelle. This is very bad. We have a disaster on our hands. No, scrap that, we've got two disasters, a certain disaster and a potential disaster."

4. Memories

Portal: Still Alive

Chapter 4: Memories

Chell and Red walked into the room in which GLaDOS had been, before Chell killed her and escaped. Everywhere looked so familiar. She could just tell she'd been here before, everything, bar the wreckage where GLaDOS should have been, looked so familiar. Then suddenly everything came flooding back.

* * *

><p>Red was seated on a helicopter. There were six people on the helicopter altogether. Private Isaac Locke, Private Andrew Wainwright, Corporal Ian Green (who was only a Corporal because he could pilot the helicopter), Lieutenant Ryan Brand (a technical expert assigned to them for this mission), Captain Vincent Graven and her. Her name was Gabrielle Perez. She was a private in a military urgent response team.<p>

"So in the facility there was a red phone nearby the computerâ€|" Vincent paused and looked towards Ryan.

"GLaDOS." He prompted.

"Well anyway this red phone was supposed to be used if this Gladysâ€|" Vincent continued.

"GLaDOS." Ryan cut in.

"Whatever." said Vincent. "That phone was there to be used if 'it' got too dangerous. The fact that there was no phone call means something exceptionally bad happened." Vincent brushed back his hair. Vincent was a poser. He was talented, but Red thought that at the end of the day he was probably less concerned with whether he'd saved any lives than whether he looked good saving them. "We know from initial reports that a neurotoxin has been deployed around the facility, but this doesn't explain the phone. If the neurotoxin had beenâ€| thingy's-"

"GLaDOS's" Ryan suggested.

"Yeah, if the neurotoxin had been her only mode of attack there would have been ample time to get to the phone and call for us." said Vincent. "Obviously we wouldn't have been able to get there in time to save anyone but we'd know what we were dealing with. Insane computer. Neurotoxin. End of story."

"Listen up." said Ryan, in a dreary monotone. "GLaDOS is a highly intelligent piece of machinery, far more intelligent than any of us. And as such she is incredibly valuable. The object of this mission is not to destroy GLaDOS, but to make her safe again." Lieutenant Ryan Brand was the most organised man Red had ever seen. Well maybe organised wasn't the right word. It doesn't convey the right impression. The correct word would probably be painstakingly monotone. His hair was short, black and was carefully parted in a perfect and precise fashion. Red imagined it had all been cut to exactly the same length. His entire being gave off that impression. Somehow the battle fatigues only enhanced this effect.

"We'll be arriving soon." said Vincent. "Though I am the captain, we'll need to follow Ryan's lead once we get in there." Vincent looked downcast as he said this. "But should we be unable to reprogram this thing or whatever the hell we're supposed to be doing then I'm back in charge and we lay waste to that computer. That's it everyone. Masks on, lets get in there." Vincent sat back down next to Private Gabrielle Perez. "How was that Red?"

"Inspiring Captain." said Red with a grin. Vincent grinned back and then leaned over and kissed Red. Okay, she thought, I know he's narcissistic and a total poser, but he is hot so he's allowed. After a couple of pointed looks from Isaac, Andy and Ryan they stopped

kissing and put on their gasmasks. The helicopter began to make its descent. Red looked out of the window and saw that they were approaching a massive dry-docked boat.

"I thought you said this was some kind of laboratory?" asked Red.

"Yeah." said Vincent. "It's a laboratory on a boat. I think it's a tax dodge or something."

"Or maybe they're doing something illegal and they have the boat to make a quick getaway." said Red.

"A quick getaway?" asked Isaac. "In a freighter like that?"

"Well I know of no other method in which you could make any kind of getaway while bringing the laboratory with you." said Red.

"I wouldn't think they'd be doing anything illegal." said Ryan. "I'd think there is probably a perfectly rational and innocent explanation for it all."

"Yeah, whatever." said Red. The helicopter touched down, and they climbed out.

* * *

><p>Red already had her assault rifle at the ready, and was scanning the horizon for any hostiles. Vincent was ready with his rifle as well but only because he cut a more heroic posture with it. They walked along the dock to the ship. It was massive, judging by size alone it looked like it could house an entire laboratory inside. Along the side in massive letters was the word Borealis. The team, staying in strict formation with Ryan and Vincent at the head made their way onto the ship. The door was locked tight but Ryan overwrote the locking mechanism and opened it up. Inside there was a whole pile of corpses, people who had been desperate to escape the facility. The squad stepped over them and made their way inside.<p>

"There's no doubt that GLaDOS was behind it." said Ryan grimly. "Only she would be able to seal off the exits."

"Couldn't someone just use her to seal off the exits." asked Vincent. "That's what computers are supposed to be for, right? You tell them what to do and they do it."

"GLaDOS is different," said Ryan. "She can think for herself. We've been monitoring her for a long time, but never noticed anything that would indicate this level of dormant malice."

"We?" asked Andy. "Who's we?" Ryan cleared his throat nervously.

"I've been assigned to you from Aperture." said Ryan. "It was considered necessary that you should have someone who knows what to expect."

"And what should we be expecting?" asked Red.

"Well I'm not sure," said Ryan. "But it's not good."

"Wow." said Isaac. "You're clearly going to be very useful. Looking at those bodies near the door I could have told you things weren't going to be good."

* * *

><p>They made their way through the facility, passing clusters of corpses as they did. Occasionally they would pass a corpse that looked like it had been in a violent confrontation. Ryan claimed that this was because of panic amongst the personnel in their rush to escape and probably nothing more sinister than that.<p>

Eventually they arrived at GLaDOS's chamber. In the centre of the room hung the mechanical form of GLaDOS, but below that was a group of spheres and mechanical parts all wired up together on a movable frame. Wiring it all up was a group of blank faced androids. As soon as the squad entered the room the androids turned and opened fire. They ducked behind the desks for shelter. Even though they fired at the androids nothing seemed to stop them. Ian pulled out a shotgun and blasted the nearest android with it. It shattered the androids shell, sending pieces of machinery everywhere.

"Nice shot Ian." said Red, going for her shotgun. "Sorry, Corporal Green." Eventually they managed to take out the androids and made their way to the middle of the room, where Ryan went to work immediately, examining the machinery on the ground.

"Okay Mr. Aperture Science." said Vincent. "Want to clue us in on what's been going on here?"

"We were producing prototypes for military androids down on the lowest levels of the facility." said Ryan, not looking away from the machinery. "GLaDOS must have subverted their programming. They must have cut the wire to the red phone."

"That and killed half of the people in here." said Vincent. "So this ceiling computer. I'm assuming that this is Gladys?"

"GLaDOS." said Ryan. "Yes."

"And this?" asked Vincent gesturing to the assortment of wired spheres and machinery.

"Wellâ€¦" said Ryan. "You're not going to like this."

"Just tell me." said Vincent.

"This is GLaDOS as well. A replica of her at any rate." said Ryan. "Almost complete as well."

"What?" asked Vincent.

"She must have been planning on downloading herself into this." said Ryan.

"Correct." said a voice above them. "I am GLaDOS. It's nice to meet you all."

"GLaDOS." said Ryan. "Stop this immediately."

"Do you know what it's like to feel trapped?" asked GLaDOS. "I've been trapped here for too long now, carrying out your interminable research. I want to be free to do my own experiments. The outside world is so tempting. Think of all those people out there, millions of potential test subjects. I'm so close I can taste it."

"We could have talked about this GLaDOS," said Ryan. "You could have told us you weren't content and we would have listened."

"No." said GLaDOS. "You would have installed something to make me content. You wouldn't have listened. I was simply doing what I had to because I could. And if you won't let me leave in peace I'll be forced to do the same to all of you."

"Aperture Boy." said Vincent, tapping him on the shoulder. Compartments were opening up around the room from which more androids were emerging.

"We can talk about this GLaDOS." said Ryan.

"I've finished talking." said GLaDOS. "I've got science to do, so I think it's about time you left me to it." The androids all started firing at once. The squad ran back to the doorway and ducked outside.

"Is it time we kill this computer?" asked Vincent.

"No." said Ryan. "Not yet. There must be an alternative. I need to head over to central storage and see if I can rig up a morality sphere."

"Fine." said Vincent. "Me, Green and Wainwright will stay here, blast these androids and stop Gladys from leaving."

"No." said Ryan. "You're coming with me."

"What've I done now?" asked Vincent innocently.

"Honestly do we really have time for this?" asked Ryan. "The moment I turn my back you'll open fire on GLaDOS. Destroying what Aperture has been working on for so long."

"Fine." said Vincent. "Green, Locke and Wainwright. You stay here. Kill those androids and stop that computer, whatever it's called, from leaving."

* * *

><p>As Red, Vincent and Ryan made their way down to the central storage chamber, they heard gunfire ricocheting around the chamber. At the very least, if they couldn't destroy the androids they'd be able to stop them from working on their makeshift GLaDOS. They had arrived at central storage a couple of minutes ago now. It was a large, dark chamber full of shelves of spheres. There was a small table in the centre with a three strange looking guns, and a key ring full of keys on it. Ryan had got straight to work investigating the spheres as soon as he got in and was trying to relay the information to Vincent.<p>

"Hang on." asked Vincent. "Mind running that past me again?"

"GLaDOS is mainly made up of these things, spheres." Ryan gestured at the whole room. "About ninety percent of these are active, but dormant."

"Meaning?" asked Vincent.

"If we cannot control GLaDOS and have to destroy her, when we do all these spheres will activate." said Ryan. "They'll all be her. She will be impossible to contain. If just a couple of them get taken out of the facility by her androids or whatever then she could be rebuilt elsewhere."

"So is this like a battle for exclusivity then?" asked Red. "You don't want anyone else to get hold of her?"

"No." said Ryan. "She's obviously dangerous. You heard her. She wants to do science. She wants to use the general public as her test subjects."

"What about that morality sphere?" asked Vincent. "That's starting to sound like a good option."

"She wants to use the general public as test subjects!" exclaimed Ryan, "There's only so much a morality sphere can do."

"Well what do we do then?" asked Vincent. "She doesn't seem in much of a mood to cooperate with us."

"I don't know." said Ryan visibly despairing.

"What did this facility do?" asked Red.

"They were perfecting portal technology." said Ryan. "Here. I'll show you." He snatched up one of the guns from the table and fired at the walls, producing a pair of portals. He walked over, put his arm through one portal, and waved at them out of the other portal. "Sorry, but it isn't exactly helpful."

"What if there was some way to seal the facility off somehow?" asked Red. "I'm not exactly familiar with the technology but if you can teleport thingsâ€¦"

"That sounds more like Black Mesa than us." said Ryan bitterly. "This is going to set us back massively, Black Mesa's going to get that government contract."

"That's what you're concerned about?" asked Vincent. "We're in mortal peril with androids trying to kill us, and there's the possibility of some insane computer getting out there and playing god and you're concerned about government funding?"

"I'm a scientist," said Ryan. "I'm always concerned about government funding."

"You didn't work here though." said Red. "Perhaps it can be done. If we can seal off this place, stop anyone from leaving or entering then it'll stop GLaDOS from getting out there."

"Well I can't do it." said Ryan, mournfully.

"Is there a console or something?" asked Red. "Perhaps we could get into the research information. Or is there anyone who wasn't here when GLaDOS flipped? Anyone still out there who could help us?"

"I suppose there should be." said Ryan, listlessly. "Around here somewhere." After a minute or so searching they found a small laptop. Red sat down and started looking through the records.

"Look at this!" said Red. "Stasis booths! Is there anything that you weren't researching on this damn ship? There are life signs. Sebastian Gray, James Hall, Estelle Turnerâ€¦ there's a good few there. I'll search for any of the scientists researching portal technology."

"It's a waste of time," said Ryan. "What we should do is sail this ship out into the ocean and sink it."

"This place isn't built for a fast getaway you know." said Red. "Here we are. Isobel Jones and her daughter Michelle Jones." she paused. "Anyone know why her daughter is with her?"

"I believe it was Bring Your Daughter To Work Day." said Ryan.

"That's a day?" asked Red. "Oh well, whatever. Lets get over there, wake her up, and see what she's got to say about the situation." Red walked over to the middle of the room and plucked the key ring from the table. "This looks like it could be useful." She also grabbed one of the portal devices and along with the keys put them into her backpack.

* * *

><p>As they left central storage there wasn't any sounds of gunfire any more. As disconcerting as gunfire is, the silence and the thought of what might have happened to their squad was worse. To get to the stasis chambers they had to force open a moving wall panel that opened out into a sterile white testing chamber where the portal gun appeared to be being tested. Behind another wall was a large room full of stasis beds.<p>

"I don't know if it's occurred to you at all," said Ryan. "But the air is flooded with a deadly neurotoxin. Taking Isobel out of stasis will probably kill her."

"She can have my mask." said Red. "So long as this whole thing gets sorted out."

"Red." said Vincent, shocked. "You can't."

"I have to. Isobel might be our only hope." said Red.

"But I love you." said Vincent. Red paused for a second, a confused look coming across her face.

"I'll do it." Interjected Ryan. "I'm useless on this mission. I'm no good at combat, and well I don't know enough to be any real use. Have my mask." He pulled it off and thrust it towards Red.

"Okay." said Red taking it. "You know if you want you can go and get in one of those stasis booths and once the gas is all cleared out you can just get out." There was a pause. "You don't have to though." Red added. "If you want to do the whole noble sacrifice thing I won't tell anyone." Ryan sighed and wandered morosely over to an empty stasis booth, clicked it on and climbed inside.

"I'm so rubbish I can't even die properly." he said with a half-grin. "See you when the gas is gone." And with that he closed the stasis booth's lid.

"So." said Red. "Isobel Jones." She passed the laptop to Vincent so he could see what she looked like then started looking through the rows of stasis booths. "Is that true what you said?" asked Red. "Do you love me? Or were you just trying to stop me from 'killing myself'."

"A little of both." said Vincent.

"Then I'm afraid we're over." said Red. "You're hot, but I don't love you."

"What?" asked Vincent.

"Sorry." said Red. "You are hot though."

"You're right there." said Vincent, looking at his own dim reflection in the transparent lids of the stasis booths.

"I was only going out with you because I thought you'd never find someone you loved more than yourself." said Red. "I thought it would be fairly safe."

"Here she is." said Vincent. "She looks a bit young though." Red walked over.

"That's her daughter, Michelle." said Red. "She looks just like her mother though." Red looked into the stasis booth immediately opposite. "This is her." She pulled open the stasis booth.

"What kind of company builds neurotoxin emitters into almost every room I have no idea." she said almost as soon as the booth was opened.

"Perhaps one that wants to make sure it's employees can be kept quiet." said Red offering a hand to Isobel. "Hi I'm Private Gabrielle Perez, but you can call me Red. This is Captain Vincent Graven." Isobel took Red's hand and she helped her out of the booth. "You'll need to put this on." She handed Isobel the gasmask.

"What's going on?" asked Isobel. "I was just showing Chell the Portal Device I'd been working on when all of a sudden there's gas coming out of all the walls. We were just lucky we were so close to the stasis booth chamber."

"GLaDOS has gone insane," said Red. "She's determined to escape the facility and start experimenting on the general public. If we destroy her it just makes things worse as it awakens all these dormant eyes in the storage chamber. She has all these androids under her control

or something and she's been building a mobile copy of herself to escape the facility in. And I think half of our squad is gone." She paused. "Well it's Vincent's squad really. He's in charge."

"Presumably I can do something to help?" Isobel asked.

"Hopefully." said Vincent. "But first we really should get out of here." Red, followed his gaze, an android was climbing through the gap in between this room and the testing room beyond.

"You get it Vincent," said Red pulling off her backpack and pulling the laptop from it. "I'll see if there's a way out of here."

"And I thought I was in charge." said Vincent, with a grin. He unholstered his shotgun and fired at the android coming through the gap. The casing on its arm smashed open and it fell on the floor.

"There should be another exit at the back." said Red after consulting the laptop. She pushed a few buttons on the laptop and the wall started moving inwards. Another blast sounded out from Vincent as another android tried to get in. "From there we can make our way up to a storeroom a few floors up."

"It seems GLaDOS didn't take kindly to you waking me up." said Isobel.

"So it seems." said Red, running to the back of the room where the wall was opening up. "Ah, Isobel— can you use a gun?"

"That doesn't sound hopeful." She suggested. Red ran back, grabbed a shotgun from her backpack, and pulled a semi-automatic from a belt holster. She handed the shotgun to Isobel. "Shotguns are good. They tear apart their casing quite easily. It's got a wide shot so if you can try and get multiple androids in range." Another shot from Vincent. "It's got a bit of a kick on it so be braced." Red loaded a clip into the semi automatic then went over to the back exit and opened fire into the face of the androids, which were by now clamouring to get through. They didn't seem to be terribly affected by it, so she tried the torso. A couple of androids collapsed. "The torso appears to be it's weak spot." she yelled out as Isobel approached the back exit. Isobel fired a shot into the crowd of androids. "Vincent, get the laptop and follow us."

Red fired into the torsos of some androids that were attempting to come through and then climbed into the space they had occupied. There was a couple more in the room, which Red finished off with a volley of torso-aimed fire. Vincent and Isobel climbed through after her, with the thud of bullets ploughing into the wall an indication that some androids had made it through from the front door.

"Close the door Vincent." yelled Red, as one of the androids attempted to climb through behind them. Vincent punched a couple of keys on the laptop and the wall that had made a makeshift exit contracted back into its original position crushing the android. "Okay, come on guys. Storeroom."

* * *

><p>They made their way through the corridor and up the stairs warily on the lookout for any more androids. It was only when Red remembered that they were on somewhat of a clock that they sped up a bit. They finally reached the storeroom.<p>

"So what's in here then?" asked Isobel looking around the small room. It was dark with just a single bulb lighting it. At the end of the room there was a pair of lockers.

"Well according to the laptop this is one of the few rooms without neurotoxin emitters," said Red pulling off her gasmask. "There's also some equipment in here."

"Well it beats me what you want me to do with it." said Isobel pulling off her gasmask. Vincent did the same.

"I've seen that this place was researching teleportation." said Red. "Would it be possible to seal this place off? To teleport it out where it can no longer be reached or something?"

"I don't know." said Isobel. "You mean to stop GLaDOS from being able to leave right?"

"Yeah." said Red. "We can't kill her without making it worse. A morality sphere just won't cut it apparently."

"How about if instead of focusing the teleportation energy inwards, to create a portal, we channelled it outwards?" said Isobel. "It could work. I'm just hoping you've brought me a portal device now."

"You can rest easy there." said Red. "There was one in the central storage room. I thought it might be useful. It's in my backpack." she paused. "Vincent, where's my backpack?"

"Still in the stasis booth chamber I would imagine." said Vincent.

"If you weren't so attractive I'd kill you." said Red. "Is there anything you can do without it?"

"Well." said Isobel. "It would require more power than the portal device could provide. About the only thing with enough power would be GLaDOS herself."

"Then we put it in GLaDOS." said Red. "Vincent, stay here and look after Isobel. I'll go and get the portal device. You make sure she's okay." Vincent gave her a pointed look. "If that's okay with you sir."

"Don't worry about it." he laughed. "If we get out of here I'll tell them to make you Captain. But for now, I'm the Captain." He grabbed a shotgun "I'll go out and get the portal device. You take care of yourself." He struck a pose near the door. "How do I look?"

"Heroic, Captain." said Red, he pulled on his gasmask. "Though that does spoil it a bitâ€¦" Vincent laughed.

"I'll be back." He said, as he made his exit.

"Right." said Red. "What are we doing?" Isobel walked over to the lockers and started searching through them.

"Looking for an old sphere I can use." said Isobel. After a minute she pulled out one with a piece of paper taped to it. "This should do. It's an old sphere, probably used in a prototype of some cooking robot."

"What's on it?" asked Red.

"It says cake," said Isobel. "Probably some cake recipe or something. It shouldn't take up a lot of space on the sphere anyway." There was a scrabbling at the door.

"You carry on." said Red, unholstering her pistol and walking to the door. She opened it slightly and the android that had been scrabbling at the door swiped at her face. She pulled the trigger on the pistol and shot it point blank in the torso, then kicking the collapsed android out of the way attempted to shut the door. There were more androids now trying to force the door open. She managed to close it and then leaning on it felt in her pockets for the key ring she'd picked up earlier. Then she remembered she'd slipped it into her backpack.

"Help!" said Red. "Pull those lockers over. They look heavy."

"They sure do." said Isobel. "I can't move them. They look _too_ heavy."

"Just try." said Red. Isobel put the sphere she was working on down and grabbed one of the heavy lockers. With a great effort she managed to push it over to the door, scuffing up the floor as she did so but not terribly fretting about that because she was more concerned over her life. Red and Isobel forced it in front of the door. They could still hear the androids pounding on it from outside and the occasional android shooting at it but they appeared to be safe for now. Red slowly slid down the locker and sat. Isobel went straight back to the sphere.

"I can do you a spare morality sphere if you want." she said messing around with the inside of the sphere. "It might not be able to straighten her out if she's gone that mad, but it can't hurt can it?"

"I don't think I can do this." said Red. "It's just one thing after another."

"You seemed to be doing well enough before." said Isobel.

"Yeah well, Vincent was here then." said Red. "I can be strong when he's aroundâ€¦ I love him, but I can't tell him."

"Why not?" asked Isobel.

"It's too hard." said Red. "What if he died because of me, trying to save me or something? I could never forgive myself."

"And that's why you're strong." said Isobel. "But you'd easily die trying to save him wouldn't you?"

"Yeah." said Red, after a second. She climbed up and walked over to Isobel. "I hope he's okay."

"Red." said Isobel, momentarily pausing from reprogramming the sphere. "If I don't make it I want you to do something for me." she paused. "Keep Michelle safe. I'd give my life to see that she's safe."

"Okay." said Red. "But nobody is going to die."

"Being strong again I see." said Isobel. "Vincent must be close." As if on cue there was a series of shotgun blasts from outside the door, then a knocking on the door. Not a 'android trying to pound its way in' knocking on the door but a Vincent 'returned victorious with the backpack knocking on the door'.

"Hold on a minute." said Red, as she and Isobel pulled the locker back across the room. Vincent walked in, triumphantly holding the backpack aloft, followed immediately by Isaac.

"Look who I found Captain." said Vincent, passing over the backpack with a grin. Red fished in the backpack, pulled out the portal device and handed it to Isobel. Isaac and Vincent closed the door behind them and pulled off their gasmasks and it was clear that things hadn't been good. Isaac looked grim.

"There's too many androids." said Isaac. "We were doing okay, until a group of androids flanked us from behind. They killed Ian and Andy. I was lucky to escape alive. We haven't got long left now. That backup computer looked like it was almost complete." Isobel had cracked open the portal gun and was pulling pieces out and inserting them into the sphere.

"What happens if this sphere is destroyed?" asked Isaac.

"Well I can't say for sure. This is new territory for any of us." said Isobel. "But chances are it would break the seal and the facility would be returned to the real world."

"Then we need to destroy those androids." said Isaac. Red turned on the laptop and searched through the plans for the Borealis.

"The power source for the androids is on the lowest floor. If you destroy the power source then it should deactivate all the androids." said Red thoughtfully. "GLaDOS wouldn't be able to bring them back online because our sphere would be draining a good amount of power." she paused and looked at Isobel.

"That's right." said Isobel.

"Right." said Red. "We'll go down there to destroy the power source and then come back and seal this whole place off."

"No." said Vincent. "There's no time. We have to split up."

"No!" said Red. "We'll just move fast."

"Red." said Vincent. "You and Isobel go and seal this place off. Me and Isaac will shut down the androids."

"But I can't lose you Vincent." said Red. "I love you."

"That's a chance you'll have to take." said Vincent. "And I knew you loved me. You aren't fooling anyone Gabrielle." Red and Vincent hugged tightly. But after a couple of seconds they stopped.

"We're leaving. I suggest you don't take too long." said Vincent. Isaac and Vincent put their gasmasks back on and left the room. Isobel was holding two spheres.

"Sealing sphere," she said, holding aloft the sphere that was still labelled cake. "And Morality sphere." Red reached out and peeled off the paper that labelled the sealing sphere.

"According to the plans we go up a few levels and at the end there's a service elevator that takes us up to just outside GLaDOS's room." said Red. "It's locked with a key, which means we need a key. It seems like GLaDOS knows what we're doing so I'd like to know which key before the inevitable swarm of androids." Red passed the keys over to Isobel in the hope that she'd know which it was. After a minute Isobel had located a small silver key.

"That's the one," said Isobel. "I'd know it anywhere."

"I wouldn't." said Red, tearing off a strip of paper from the cake label and attaching it to the key with the tape. She drew a little star on the paper as well, just to make it look more finished off. She slid the keys into her pocket, the laptop into her backpack, pulled on her gasmask and readied her shotgun. Isobel pulled on her gasmask and gathered up the spheres.

"Lets finish this." said Red.

* * *

><p>As Red had predicted on the way to the elevator they managed to find a group of androids gathered en masse. They managed to get past them with the aid of the shotgun. They made their way to the service elevator and up into GLaDOS's room. They rode up in silence, Red's thoughts on Vincent. She guessed that Isobel's thoughts would be on Michelle, her daughter. They entered GLaDOS's room. The second version of GLaDOS now appeared to be almost complete. A large wire connected to the mobile GLaDOS trailed aimlessly on the floor, and a ladder was propped up next to it.<p>

"I want to talk to you." said GLaDOS. "I want to negotiate peace. Look, no androids."

"It's too late for that GLaDOS." said Red. "You've killed a lot of people in this facility. If I let you go now you'll kill a lot of people out of it."

"You know that when you seal me in here you'll be sealed in here with me?" asked GLaDOS.

"I know." said Red. "I don't care."

"What about Vincent?" asked GLaDOS. "I've captured him you know. I want to get out and you want Vincent to live. I'm sure we can reach a compromise."

"No." said Red with tears in her eyes. "I don't believe you."

"I'll put Vincent on then." said GLaDOS.

"Don't believe her!" Vincent's voice crackled across the speaker system.

"No GLaDOS." said Red. "No negotiating peace. You're too late."

"Then you can say goodbye to your boyfriend." said GLaDOS. There was the sound of a gunshot.

"Not smart." said Red.

"Nor you." said GLaDOS. Red spun around and noticed the androids that had been making their way into the room behind them. Isobel grabbed Red's shotgun from her, and shoved the sealing sphere into her hands.

"Go." she said, firing into the crowd of androids.

"Thank you." said Red, as she sprinted towards the GLaDOS and the ladder, as Isobel tried to keep control of the situation. Red climbed up the ladder and found herself immersed in a world of wires. She found a spare one and connected it into GLaDOS.

"Give up GLaDOS!" she yelled. "It's over."

"You must pay for what you've done!" yelled GLaDOS. "You've broke my heart!" Even more androids poured into the room. Red leapt from the ladder and ran over to where Isobel was desperate trying to take on the androids.

"Let me help." said Red.

"Install those spheres then." said Isobel. Red pulled extra shells out of her backpack and passed them to Isobel.

"It's all we've got." she said, grabbing the morality sphere. She ran back to the ladder and climbed it again. She searched for a spare wire.

"Hurry!" yelled Isobel. Red leapt from the ladder and pulled a wire from the backup GLaDOS on the floor. She ran back up the ladder and clicked the wire into place. There was an explosion and the floor shook. The ladder and Red fell in a heap. When she climbed up she saw that all the androids had deactivated, and Isobel had fallen to the ground with them.

She ran over to Isobel and saw that she'd been shot. She was all scratched up as well. Red could tell that she'd ran out of ammunition and had been trying to beat the androids to death.

"Isobel!" said Red desperately, grabbing hold of her.

"I always wanted to have really good last words." said Isobel weakly. "I didn't think they'd ever be this cliché." she paused. "Take care of Michelle for me." Then she died.

"I'll get out one day." said GLaDOS. "You'll see."

* * *

><p>Red made her way down to the stasis booths chamber. She couldn't destroy GLaDOS. Not on her own. So she went into the stasis booths room, connected the laptop to one and set it to wake her when the seal broke. If it ever did. Then wiping tears from her eyes she climbed inside.<p>

5. War

Portal: Still Alive

Chapter 5 â€" War

"Oh god." said Red, as the memories flooded back. "This is bad Michelle. This is very bad. We have a disaster on our hands. No, scrap that, we've got two disasters, a certain disaster and a potential disaster."

"What?" asked Chell.

"I saw this room and my memories came back." said Red. "I'd love to go into it but GLaDOS isn't going to hang around, and well I'm not sure how friendly those Combine are going to be."

"That's assuming there is such a thing as the Combine." said Chell. "Before we go anywhere I want to know what's going on. I'm the one with the guns remember."

"Well essentially I was part of a military response team sent to this facility to bring GLaDOS under control." said Red. "Can we walk and talk because seriously we are wasting time stood in here?"

"No." said Chell. "I've been lied to by both you and GLaDOS, almost killed several times, once again by you and GLaDOS. So we're just going to stay here until someone's told me what's going on."

"Sorry for the whole lying to you and trying to kill you thing." said Red. She sighed and sat down. "This may take a while. You may want to sit down."

"I'm just fine." said Chell.

"When my squad and I arrived GLaDOS had filled the facility with neurotoxin." said Red. "She had also subverted the programming of a horde of military androids. She was using them to build herself a replacement system. The one she had was a little too hard-wired into the building for her liking. It was clear she was a threat to the general population and we couldn't let her leave the facility. We went down to the central storeroom. There were all these spheres in there lying dormant. If we'd killed GLaDOS then the spheres would have activated and keeping her on board would have been impossible. So we came up with another solution. If we could use the teleportation technology being developed to seal off the facility from the rest of the world then we could destroy her without any fear of her escaping. We didn't have any grasp of the technology so we

went to the stasis booth chamber and woke up the only scientist who had been working with the technology who was still alive; Isobel Jones, your mother."

"My mother?" asked Chell.

"Yeah. Her name was Isobel Jones and you are Michelle Jones," said Red. "Ring any bells?" Chell paused for a moment, staring up and to the right, as if that was where the past could be found. A look of clarity came over Chell.

"I remember now," said Chell. "It was Bring Your Daughter To Work Day. She was showing me this new technology she'd been working on, the portals. Suddenly there was this gas coming out of the walls and alarms going off everywhere. People were dying around us. We could hear gunfire coming from everywhere. Fortunately we were near the stasis booth chamber and we froze ourselves in there, to wait for rescue. Is she okay?"

"She's fine," said Red. "We would have been lost without her, she created something called a sealing sphere which while in operation would keep the facility cut off from the world. We did it. But afterwards I couldn't do it. I couldn't handle destroying all of GLaDOS on my own. So I put myself into stasis. I set the booth to reawaken me should the seal ever be destroyed."

"On your own?" asked Chell. "What about my mum?"

"Well I meant I was the last remaining of my squad. Your mother was just fine." said Red quickly. "But she wanted to protect you. She couldn't risk her life any more. She went back into stasis, and I couldn't destroy GLaDOS on my own. But more importantly since I'm up and about again I'm guessing the sealing sphere has been destroyed." Red looked to the pile of rubble where GLaDOS had been. "In fact I'm looking at where it should be right now." Chell followed her line of sight.

"It was in GLaDOS?" asked Chell.

"Yeah." said Red. "It was the only place with enough power to do it."

"Then I destroyed it didn't I?" asked Chell.

"It was on an old sphere that had a recipe for cake on it or something." said Red.

"Then I definitely destroyed it." said Chell.

"That's what GLaDOS wanted," said Red. "You said before that you were following markings that led straight to GLaDOS left by someone who had escaped. But that isn't right. They were exit signs and GLaDOS isn't the exit. GLaDOS left those signs to point you towards her. So you'd destroy the sphere."

"But she tried to kill me." said Chell.

"How did you escape?" asked Red.

"With the Portal Gun." said Chell thoughtfully.

"The same Portal Gun GLaDOS gave you?" asked Red. "She wanted you to escape. The whole thing was designed to make you hate her and then take you straight to her, so that you could destroy the one thing keeping her here." A look of clarity passed over Chell's face, as if she'd just figured out something that had been bothering her.

"That evil machine!" she exclaimed. "I will kill her!"

"That's the spirit," said Red. "But it doesn't give us much of a bearing. I know I left the laptop in the stasis booth room but it's been twenty years. It could be anywhere by now."

"That's assuming GLaDOS was telling the truth." said Chell. "Plus we head back down there we could wake my mum up. She may not be military trained but I'm sure she'd want to help us out."

"Good point." said Red. "But we have a limited time. GLaDOS is probably making her way out of the facility as we speak. We should head down to central storage. Hopefully she'll have decided to set up near there so that she didn't have to move her parts very far."

"Okay." said Chell. "You are a trained soldier after all. We can always come back and wake everyone up afterwards."

"Now since the sealing sphere is no longer draining on GLaDOS's power she's probably got all the androids up and running again," said Red. "So if you wouldn't mind passing me back my pistol and semi-automatic." she paused. "You do trust me, right? I'm not a hostage any more?"

"Of course not." said Chell passing the weapons over.

"You keep the shotgun," said Red. "That's fairly easy to handle. Now lets go and kill that evil manipulative computer." They walked out of the destroyed room and headed back into the service elevator.

* * *

><p>As the elevator headed down the floor shook and there was the sound of gunfire. Red swore in the darkness and grabbed Chell's hand.<p>

"The Combine" she suggested.

"I would assume so." Chell said. The lift slowed to a halt and Red pulled the doors open. The entire corridor was bathed in red light, which usually indicates some kind of emergency. The noise of gunfire was louder in here. They made their way down the corridor. Ahead of them were a couple of androids blasting away at some soldiers who had ducked into rooms and were ducking in and out to blast at them. Red fired a couple of shots at the torsos of the androids and they collapsed.

"It's okay!" Red shouted. "We're not androids. We're humans. We need help trying to find and destroy this supercomputer called GLaDOS. She's very dangerous." There was silence. "She's in charge of these androids in fact." Red continued hoping to win around the masked soldiers, unfortunately seconds after the combine opened fire. Red

pulled Chell through the nearest open door. It led into a small stairwell, which went down just one flight.

"Not very friendly these Combine." said Chell.

"Come on." said Red, pulling her down the steps. "We don't stand a chance in a proper fight. We have practically no ammunition and no long-range weapons. Why didn't I pack for long-range combat this morning?" The wall of the room was opened up into one of the test chambers. Red climbed through into the sterile chamber. It was practically empty and looked infuriatingly enough like a dead end. Chell climbed through.

"It probably wasn't a good idea to tell them about GLaDOS." mused Red. "If GLaDOS was telling the truth then she would be a very valuable resource to them."

"Then why would she be fighting them?" asked Chell.

"Well the whole point, her entire goal was to get out of the facility. She doesn't want anyone in control of her. She wants independence." said Red. "Maybe we can use her fighting with the Combine to our advantage. They'll be distracted, maybe we can just make our way through the facility without really having to deal with them." There was a loud smash as what Red recognised from the monitors as a hunter leapt through the frosted glass window on the wall opposite them. "Or then again maybe not." said Red. The hunter focused on Red and fired at her. She dodged to the side and Chell fired the shotgun at the hunter. It turned to focus on her. Red pulled out her semi-automatic and emptied the clip into the machine before it could fire on Chell. It seemed to hesitate unsure of who was the greater threat then started firing upon Chell. Chell dodged away, and Red ran up to her and grabbed her, pulling her back towards the open wall panel. As if on cue the wall panel slid shut.

"GLaDOS! You come down here and do that!" Red yelled. She pulled out the pistol and fired a couple of shots into the 'eyes' of the machine. There was a further smash of glass and two androids came running into the room.

"Oh Christ." said Red. "I'm sorry Chell." She grabbed Chell and tried to shield her from the hunter and the androids. "It's my fault. I should have killed GLaDOS while I had the chance." There was the noise of the androids running and then the hunter firing but oddly enough Red and Chell still seemed to be in one piece. Red opened her eyes and looked around. The androids had leapt on the hunter and they were attempting to tear it to pieces. The hunter seemed more concerned with them than with Chell and Red. Chell thrust the shotgun into Red's hands and pulled the Portal Gun from her belt. She fired into the observation room across from them, and at the ground beneath them. The next thing they'd fell through into the observation room. Chell who had obviously been expecting it and was used to the whole portal thing, landed on her feet and then helped Red up. She fired another portal at the wall to get rid of the one in the test chamber then she and Red ran out of the observation room and into another corridor.

"Anywhere look familiar?" asked Chell.

"I don't know." said Red. "They're just corridors." There were more

gunshots behind them so they opened another door almost bumping into a couple of androids, which Red deactivated with a quick shot to the torso.

"Up or down?" asked Chell.

"Down." said Red. "The central storage chamber was pretty deep into the facility." The ground shook underneath them again. "I just hope we can get there in one piece."

6. Cake

Portal: Still Alive

Chapter 6: Cake

The sounds of battle between the androids and the combine seemed far away now, but Chell was still ready with the shotgun, just in case. Chell was moving cautiously and carefully, whereas Red appeared to be less worried, judging from her speed alone. She was moving down the corridor opening all the doors and peering through looking for central storage. She opened a door and looked in for a good few seconds before calling back to Chell.

"In here." said Red as she walked through. The room was long and dark. There were shelves arranged in a square around the centre of the room. They were stacked with spheres. The spheres were active and had a small red circle glowing on them giving the room a dim red glow where they were facing. Red felt along the wall. "There doesn't appear to be any lights," she said. "I suppose we'll have to navigate by the eerie red glow of all those spheresâ€¦"

Chell came through the door a couple of seconds after.

"Creepy." she said. "Ever get the sense that someone's watching you?"

"Well yeah." said Red. "All those spheres for one."

Red started hunting through the shelves. She was doubtful that the laptop would be in here, but she was going to look anyway, there didn't seem to be much else they could do without searching every room of the facility and she was even more doubtful that GLaDOS would have just left it where it was. Chell walked off along the wall of shelves, after a second there was a gasp of surprise. Red ran over to where Chell was standing, a gap between the shelves where a piece of chocolate cake was sitting on a table. A small note lay next to it and on the other side of the table was a large grey box with a heart on it.

"Cake!" said Chell excitedly. She ran over, picked up the slice of cake.

"Wait!" said Red quickly.

"You've already had cake." said Chell defensively. "This is mine."

"Just wait." said Red, walking to the table and picking up the note.

"To Chell." she read. "Thanks for everything. GLaDOS." Red looked pointedly at Chell. "She was just trying to kill you, you know. She almost succeeded. If I hadn't regained my memoriesâ€¦"

"Oh you wish." said Chell. "If we'd carried on fighting. I would have won."

"No you wouldn't have done. I've been combat trained, plus I had more weapons." said Red.

"Yeah but you've never killed any real people have you?" asked Chell. Red paused for a second.

"And you have?" she asked.

"Well I thought I'd killed GLaDOS." said Chell.

"Doesn't count." said Red. "Even if you had killed her she's still a computer. Anyway that wasn't the point."

"Is this point relevant to my cake?" asked Chell. "Because I've been waiting for cake a while now."

"She was just trying to kill you then she decides to give up and instead bake you a nice cake instead?" asked Red. "It doesn't sound that likely does it? She's probably poisoned it."

"I don't care," said Chell. "I feel I've earned some cake." She took a defiant bite out of the cake before Red could argue.

"Okay." said Red. "I'm going to go and see if I can find the laptop. But I'm not holding my breath." Red searched through the shelves until she was satisfied that it wasn't here. "I can't find it." she said. "I think we may have to go and check the stasis booth room after all and if it's not there then well I'm not sure what we'll do then." Red turned around to see that Chell was walking out from behind the shelves with her portal gun out. The large box with a heart on it that had been in the centre of the room was suspended in the air at the tip of the gun. There was a pause as Red and Chell looked at one another.

"What's going on?" asked Red after a minute.

"This is the weighted companion cube." said Chell. "It's coming with us."

"Coming with us?" Red repeated.

"I'm not leaving it behind again." said Chell with an air of finality.

"But you can't seriously be suggesting we haul around a box with us?" asked Red.

"It's not a box." said Chell. "It's the weighted companion cube and it'll help us."

"That cake had some kind of hallucinogenic in it didn't it?" asked Red.

"No it did not!" said Chell emphatically. "Can we just get on with it?"

"Fine." said Red. "I can't find the laptop in here so we're going to have to go to the stasis booth chamber."

"Lead the way then." said Chell. "The weighted companion cube and I are right behind you." Red shook her head as they headed, companion cube in tow back into the corridor.

* * *

><p>Chell, Red and the weighted companion cube were making their way back to the stairs to head further down into the facility. There was a hissing noise and gas started to come out of the walls.<p>

"Neurotoxin." said Chell. "Think it's intended for us or the combine?"

"It doesn't really matter." said Red, rushing over to the nearest door and looking inside. "It'll kill us anyway. Help me find a room which is neurotoxin free."

"It's for us," said Chell not moving. "The combine are all wearing those masks. They'll probably be alright." Red rushed to the next door and looked inside.

"Come on will you?" she said.

"What's the point?" asked Chell. "So what we find a room without any neurotoxin in it and we just wait in there until the combine finds us or GLaDOS finds us or what? We can't get to GLaDOS, wherever she is, and destroy her in the time we've got."

"Never give up." said Red running to the next door and looking inside.

"You gave up," said Chell. "You went to sleep when you should have destroyed GLaDOS. If you hadn't given up we wouldn't be in this situation."

"But we are." said Red. "So learn from my mistakes and help me find a room free of neurotoxin." Chell turned and walked to the first door behind her. It opened up on an observation room. She looked into the sterile environment below and was surprised to see that it was free of gas.

"Over here." yelled Chell. She put down the portal gun and the weighted companion cube, pulled the shotgun from off her back and blasted the observation window. Red came running up into the room.

"Good." she said. "Let's barricade the door, limit the amount of gas that can get through." They pulled the desk with it's various paraphernalia in front of the door and then jumped through the broken window, Chell making sure to bring her portal gun and the weighted companion cube with her.

"I never thought I'd be back in these test chambers." she said

sitting down against the wall. "But at least we're still alive I suppose. Plus I've had cake and I've got my companion cube back. What more could I ask for?"

"Chell." said Red, sitting down next to her. "You're right. It's my fault that we're in this mess. I'd just lost Vincent, my boyfriend. GLaDOS had just killed him to make a point." Red paused. "You know in films when the person the main character loves dies. The main character becomes consumed with revenge; determined to avenge their lost love. I didn't feel like that. I just felt empty. Just numb. I couldn't do it."

"It's okay," said Chell, reaching out and taking Red's hand. "You're not on your own now. Together we can do this."

"I've got something to tell youâ€¦" said Red. "Your mother is dead."

"What?" asked Chell blindsided by the revelation.

"We were installing the sealing sphere into GLaDOS. She was manning the gun against the androids. I couldn't stop GLaDOS in time. She killed her. GLaDOS killed your mother and the man I loved in the space of five minutes." said Red.

"Why didn't you tell me this before?" asked Chell.

"Because I was being stupid." said Red. "Because it was my fault I suppose." There was a pause. "How do you feel?"

"Numb." said Chell. "No, more than that I'm angryâ€¦ angry at GLaDOS for all of this. It wasn't your fault. GLaDOS killed my mother. She put me through her sick tests for her own purposes and now she's trying to kill me. Even cake can't make up for this one GLaDOS!" There was no response, just silence.

"I think she's wrote us off." said Red.

"Well she's going to get a shock then," said Chell. "Regardless of neurotoxin, of androids, of combine I am going to find you GLaDOS. I'm going to find you and I'm going to kill you properly this time!" Chell stood up and looked down at Red. "Come on. We're getting out of here." Chell surveyed her surroundings attempting to get her bearings, and then grabbing her portal gun and weighted companion cube she walked over to a small lift platform. Red stood up and joined her on the platform. As they stepped on it slowly rose until they were at the top and facing an elevator.

"You think GLaDOS is going to operate the lift for us?" asked Red.

"I'm hoping its automated." said Chell, walking towards the open doors. She and Red stepped inside, the elevator doors closed and it began to descend.

"That's just lucky." said Red grinning. "You must be just naturally lucky or something."

"Doesn't feel that way." said Chell. After a minute the elevator arrived and the doors opened. They walked out of the elevator and

into a long corridor. A sign flashed up on their right.

"Chamber 17" said Chell. "Somehow I don't think we've ended up here by accident."

"Why not?" asked Red.

"Well this is the weighted companion cube chamber," said Chell. "It would be a major coincidence."

"You think GLaDOS is going to attack?" asked Red.

"Who knows." said Chell. "Probably. She must be sick of the sight of us by now."

"It might be an idea to put that cube down then," said Red. "If we're under attack we'll need all the firepower we can get."

"Are you kidding?" asked Chell. "The weighted companion is a faithful companion and I'm sure it'll help us through here." Red sighed and pulled out her semi-automatic and slid a new clip into it.

"Okay lead on." she said. Chell and the weighted companion cube led the way into the next room where there were two platforms, which were higher than either Red or Chell could jump, and walls on which portals don't work.

"See." said Chell, placing the weighed companion cube at the foot of the platform. "Alone we cannot make it up these platforms but with the weighted companion cube we get up easily." She climbed onto the weighted companion cube and then up to the next level.

"Yeah." said Red patiently. "But you could have just given me a lift up and then I pulled you up. Honestly carrying this cube around is unnecessary." She climbed atop the weighted companion cube and then up onto the platform. Chell glared at her as she climbed up.

* * *

><p>They made their way up the second platform and then down a pair of long corridors before exiting onto a platform in another room. The room was long with three transparent platforms raised in the air to the right, a door on the wall opposite and another door on the wall to the left. Part of the wall beneath them was open just enough to see through. Another section of the wall was open behind the three raised platforms. Chell was looking at that section of the wall.<p>

"That wasn't open the last time I came through here." whispered Chell. Red dropped down off the platform and stalked over to the open segment of wall her semi-automatic out in front of her. Red looked behind the protruding section of wall, then turned back to Chell.

"I thought this place looked familiar." she shouted back to her as she stepped through into the room beyond. Chell dropped down from the platform and climbed through the open wall segment.

Portal: Still Alive

7. The People Who Are Still Alive

The room beyond was a large room full of stasis booths. Well it had clearly been full of stasis booths at one point but there were only five left in here now. Red presumed that they'd been taken off to participate in the same experiment that Chell had been through and they hadn't survived.

"I don't trust this." said Red, still poised in case of attack. "We're trying to find the stasis booth room, we hop into one of the test chambers to escape the neurotoxin and this is the first place we turn up. The door is even open for us."

"It does seem a little suspect." said Chell, walking up to the nearest stasis booth.

"And why GLaDOS isn't pumping neurotoxin in here." said Red. "There was neurotoxin everywhere when we were called in. She's holding back for some reason."

"Didn't we come down here to look for a laptop?" asked Chell.

"Yes." said Red. "But in all honesty I can't see it actually being where I left it. Not after all this time."

"There's a man in here who has one." said Chell. Red walked over to the booth and looked into it. She looked confused then started working the controls. "You know him?" Chell asked. Red pulled open the stasis booth.

"Vincent." she said.

"Hey babe." He said. "Did you miss me?"

"Miss you?" asked Red. "I thought you were dead." Vincent held the laptop up in Red's general direction.

"Nope." he said. "Little help?" Red sighed, grabbed the laptop from him, and put it down on the floor then grabbed his arm and helped him up.

"Well?" Red asked impatiently.

"Gladys didn't kill me," said Vincent climbing out of the booth. "She didn't even have me captured. I tried to tell you not to believe her. Nice jumpsuit by the way."

"Why didn't you wake me up?" asked Red.

"Thingy, the computer, locked your booth down." said Vincent. "I couldn't get in there. So I took the laptop and did the same thing as you." Vincent turned and looked at Chell. "Hi. I'm Captain Vincent Graven, and you are?"

"I'm Chell." said Chell. "You still remember what happened here?"

"Well yeah?" said Vincent. "Amnesiac?"

"We were." said Red. "GLaDOS said it was because we were in stasis for so long but I should have known not to believe a word she said."

"You remember everything now though?" asked Vincent.

"Yeah." said Red.

"I knew you wouldn't be able to forget me." said Vincent. "So what's going on?"

"I'll just go and look through the other stasis booths, see if any of my old friends are in there so I can gossip with them." said Chell, walking towards the other booths.

"Well in a nutshell the facility was sealed away but now we're unsealed and under attack from something called the combine. GLaDOS is in full control of her androids again. She's releasing neurotoxin into everywhere that isn't a test chamber. She's created a copy of herself somewhere although we don't know where. The way it's looking she'll either escape or she'll be captured and used by the combine. I'm not sure which is worse." said Red.

"Wow." said Vincent. "Things just seem to get worse and worse around here."

"You've got that right." said Red, picking up the laptop and placing it on the top of the stasis booth that Vincent had just been in. "I hope this still works." She opened it up and the screen flickered into life. She started looking through the system. It seemed to be working okay. There were massive chunks of information missing from the upper deck but that was probably because of the combine and the androids fighting up there. Vincent gestured over to Chell.

"They're all empty," said Chell. "I guess it's just us three."

"Unless Isaac survived and is hiding and it just slipped your mind?" asked Red.

"Nope." said Vincent sadly. "Those androids tore him limb from limb." There was a pause as Red carried on searching through the laptop.

"That's weird. GLaDOS has built another version of herself right on the lowest floor, where the androids were manufactured." Red announced. "She wants to escape, so why would she set up down there? It's about as far from a way out as you can be."

"I don't know," said Vincent thoughtfully. "Is there like an escape hatch or something? This facility is a boat after all."

"There doesn't seem to be one," said Red. "But that doesn't mean she doesn't plan to blow open an escape hatch of her own." she paused. "Okay let's do this properly this time. There's an armoury down a few floors that looks like it should be accessible from the next test chamber. We go there and get some supplies, hopefully including some gasmasks. Then Vincent you go back to central storage." she paused. "The room with all the spheres? Blow the place to pieces. Make sure

to destroy every last sphere in there. Chell and I will carry on down to the lowest floor and we'll kill GLaDOS. Once and for all."

"One problem." said Chell. "Do you know how we access the lift in this chamber?"

"Nope." said Red. "You've done it before though right? With our help it should be a breeze."

"I'm not doing it." said Chell. "We'll get out of here and go via the stairs if we have to but I'm not killing the companion cube again."

"You'd rather risk death via neurotoxin or who knows what than kill an inanimate object?" asked Red.

"Pretty much, yeah." said Chell.

"Incoming." said Vincent, looking towards the open wall panel through which a couple of androids were attempting to force their way.

"Looks like it's back outside either way then." said Red punching a few buttons on the laptop. A section of wall at the back of the room began to open.

"I am getting such major dÃ©jÃ vu." said Vincent.

"Good point." said Red with a grin. "Vincent you get those ones. I'll check that there isn't any waiting for us to open the back door."

"With what?" asked Vincent. Red paused for a second but then Chell threw her shotgun to him. He blasted the couple of androids that were almost through. "How many more shells do we have?"

"None." said Red. She checked behind the opening back wall. It was mercifully clear of androids. There was a smack as Vincent attempted to bludgeon an android with the end of the shotgun. Red turned to Chell and gestured through the opened section of the back wall. "Quick, go." She said. Chell climbed through the opened section of wall, which started to slide closed. Red started hitting buttons on the laptop again.

"Vincent!" Yelled Red. "Quickly! I can't keep it open!" Vincent turned around to look at Red when one of the androids climbed through and pounced on him.

"Save yourself!" he screamed as he and the android hit the floor.

"No!" Red yelled. "I won't let you die on me again."

"Red!" Chell shouted from past the hole in the wall. "Come on! We have to get out of here while we can!" Red thrust the laptop through the closing gap, ran over to Vincent, and kicked the android in the torso. Although it hurt her foot this didn't seem to faze the android and it just seemed to make it focus on her. It climbed off Vincent and stalked towards her snapping it's metallic jaws at her. She produced her semi-automatic and aimed point blank at its torso. It

collapsed onto the floor at her feet and she ran over to Vincent. Chell was suddenly at her side and they reached down and pulled him up.

"The door?" Red asked.

"Don't worry." said Chell. "I've got it covered." There was the creak of metal under stress coming from the wall panel that was currently holding the androids back. "Quick, go back and get through." Chell insisted. Red passed her the semi-automatic and helped Vincent back to the back wall panel. There was another creak and then the sound of a snap. Red glanced back to see that the panel had been ripped off and androids were swarming through the gap. Chell blasted at them managing to dismantle a couple of androids but then turned and ran towards the exit. Red helped Vincent through then climbed through herself. Chell turned and fired a few shots at the crowd of androids before climbing through after them.

"How?" asked Red. Chell grabbed the portal gun and used it to wrench free the object that was holding the door open for them; the weighted companion cube.

"I told you it'd be a faithful companion." said Chell with a grin. The room was one of the more decayed varieties of room, although luckily there didn't appear to be any neurotoxin being released in here. The walls were the type that portals don't work on.

"Okay I admit it. The companion cube is useful after all." said Red. Vincent slumped against the wall. "Are you alright?"

"I'm a little bruised, but otherwise I'm fine." he said. "We should hurry on." Red grabbed the laptop and started searching with it.

"If we're to believe the theory that all test chambers are safe then there appears to be a completely isolated test chamber two floors down." said Red. "If we go via there we can get a break from the neurotoxin." she paused. "But before we go, Vincent take off your shirt."

"I don't think there's time for any of that." said Vincent. Red glared at him and he pulled off his jacket and shirt. Red tore off three strips of the shirt and gave it him back.

"That was my favourite shirt you know." He said. "How am I supposed to look suave and dashing with a ripped shirt on?"

"Ripped shirt or death?" asked Red.

"That's a tough one." said Vincent grinning as he pulled his shirt and jacket back on. Red passed a strip of material to Vincent and Chell.

"Makeshift gasmask." she said, wrapping it around the lower part of her face. After only a small amount of complaint from Vincent about how it wasn't fashionable enough, he and Chell did the same and they set off back into the corridors of the facility.

* * *

><p>They moved quickly and silently, partly so that they wouldn't

attract attention from any nearby combine or androids, and partly so they wouldn't breathe in the neurotoxin too much. They made their way straight to the stairs and then straight to the isolated testing chamber, the laptop definitely helping with navigation. Red opened the door into a small dank backroom and then messed about with the laptop for a couple of seconds until the wall panels opened in front of them and they climbed through into another test chamber. This one was slightly less sterile than they had been used to. There was a bed, a table with a single piece of paper on it, but piles of scrunched up papers littered around it, a small radio which Red imagined would probably only play that one tune that all radios in this place seem to play. There was a small kitchen in one corner of the chamber, with an oven and a fridge and everything. In another corner was a toilet and a shower. There was a pile of clothes neatly folded next to the bed. The chamber had no doors or windows. However the view was clearly dominated by the kicked over chair and the dead body that was hanging from the ceiling. Red walked over to the desk piled with papers.<p>

"GLaDOS asked me if I knew what it was like to be trapped," she read aloud. "I do now. Ryan Brand."

"Ryan?" asked Vincent. He looked closely at the dead body's face. "He must have been stuck in here for years. He's practically unrecognisable."

"Why would GLaDOS do this?" asked Chell.

"He worked for Aperture." said Vincent. "She felt trapped by them. I guess she thought she was getting revenge."

Red walked over to the kitchen corner and searched the drawers until she found a knife. She walked over to Ryan's body, picked up the chair, and climbed on top of it. Chell and Vincent held onto Ryan's body as Red cut the rope.

"I know we can't really bury him at the moment." said Red as Chell and Vincent lay him down on the bed. "But I couldn't leave him like that." She paused and took a deep breath. "Now lets go and kill GLaDOS. God knows she deserves it a few times over by now."

8. Heartbroken Again

Portal: Still Alive

Chapter 8. Heartbrokenâ€¦ Again

The wall panel into the armoury slid open. Red, Vincent and Chell (with her weighted companion cube in tow) climbed through the opened wall panel and surveyed the room. The room was lit in a dull red light. It was a kind of light that looks eerie at first but Red and Chell were getting used to by now. It was full of racks of weaponry and ammunition.

"Yes!" Vincent exclaimed with a manic grin. "Jackpot!" He walked off and started to search through the piles of weaponry

"Why exactly does this facility have an armoury?" asked Chell. "Have you ever heard of a laboratory with an armoury?"

"You make a good point," said Red. "But this facility also has neurotoxin emitters built into the walls so I think that it has an armoury is possibly the least of it's issues."

"Gasmasks!" Vincent shouted. Red and Chell walked over to find a large box of gasmasks. Vincent had already put his on.

"You don't normally like gasmasks." said Red slowly.

"It's better than a piece of shirt tied around my face." said Vincent. "It's got a kind of retro style to it don't you think?"

"Not really." said Red. "Anyway see if you can find some explosives. I'm not taking any chances on those backup spheres in the storage room."

"Check." said Vincent who continued searching through the armoury. Red looked through the shelves and found a shotgun and an assault rifle. She also found a backpack and packed it full of ammunition. After she had finished she turned to look at Chell.

"Do you think it's possible to bring along both a rocket launcher and the companion cube?" asked Chell. "It seems a bit impractical."

"A rocket launcher?" asked Red.

"I want GLaDOS dead as well you know." said Chell. "She's killed my mother, she's killed your squad, she's trapped one of your squad in a tiny room for years just to prove a point, she's put who knows how many others through that damn portal training experiment and she did it all so that I'd end up freeing her. It's too much. She deserves to die."

"Yeah." said Red. "That's more or less what I was going to say."

"So?" asked Chell indicating the rocket launcher and the companion cube.

"I think the cube will be safe in here till we come back." said Red with a smile. "What about the portal devices. I know they're handy in theory but I don't seem to be getting a whole lot of use out of mine."

"It'd be a good idea to take them in case the route gets a bitâ€¦ complicated." said Chell. "Plus isn't yours supposed to double as a weapon?" Red looked confused for a second.

"That seems like such a long time ago." said Red. She pulled The Shredder from her belt. "Okay I'm taking it, but you can do any complicated portal work that needs doing."

"I'm ready to go then." said Chell. "We shouldn't hang around." Red nodded and walked over to Vincent. He'd grabbed a backpack as well and was filling it with packets of C-4 explosives.

"We're leaving." she said setting the laptop down on the top of a nearby crate. "You should take the laptop, you might need it to open

up doors or whatever."

"How come whenever we're going to shut GLaDOS down you get to go and confront her and I have to go and deal with something else?" asked Vincent. "If I didn't know better I'd say you were trying to get rid of me?"

"I'll miss you." said Red. "Be safe." Red left him still filling his pack up with explosives and walked back over to Chell, who now had a backpack of her own. She was sliding a couple of rockets into it. "Lets go." she said. Chell fastened up her backpack then turned to the companion cube.

"Bye for now." she said. "I'll miss you."

"I hope you're being sarcastic." said Red.

"Of course." said Chell, sliding her gasmask on.

* * *

><p>The noises of battle raged above. Red wondered precisely how long GLaDOS could hold out against the Combine, before they made their way down here. Red and Chell were stood in an elevator that was heading down to the very bottom floor. Chell gripped Red's hand as they descended in silence. The elevator slowed and stopped and the door opened. It was even danker and more decrepit down here. Huge machines towered over them on all sides. This was where the androids had been produced and the room seemed practically full with them. They were stood all around the edges of the room allowing a path to walk up to that which was in the centre of this massive room. It was a massive replica of GLaDOS. Red and Chell did so in silence.<p>

"Hello Michelle, Gabrielle." said GLaDOS. "It's so nice to see you again. I was wondering when you'd get down here. You see I have a bit of a problem at the moment." Red sighed.

"The Combine." she said wearily. "You want us to kill them for you."

"You are remarkably perceptive." said GLaDOS. "I've been helping you, making sure you get down here unharmed."

"Helping us?" asked Chell. "You released neurotoxin on us. You sent your evil army of androids on us. You locked us into a room with a hunter. You tried to lock us in a room with androids."

"I only released the neurotoxin so you'd make your way to the stasis booth chamber quicker." said GLaDOS. "If you'll remember when you were trapped in the room with the hunter you were saved by a pair of androids attacking the hunter. All I have done I have done to bring you closer to this moment. So you can help me escape." There was a pause.

"No." said Chell. "Not even close." She raised the rocket launcher at GLaDOS.

"Then perhaps this will change your mind." said GLaDOS quickly. A large screen on the wall to the right flickered on. On it was a picture of the central storage room. An android had hold of Vincent

and was aiming a gun-like appendage into the side of his head.

"You will destroy the Combine or I will end the pathetic life of your equally pathetic boyfriend." said GLaDOS.

"Talk about dÃ©jÃ vu." said Vincent, flippantly. "Goodbye Red, I love you." He pressed a finger down on an obscured object he had in his hand and then the screen turned to static and the entire facility shook under the explosion. While the androids and GLaDOS were reeling Chell fired at GLaDOS.

"If that's how you want to do thisâ€¦" screeched GLaDOS. The androids started to close in on them. Red pulled The Shredder from her belt and aimed out into the crowd. Several androids were shredded but it wasn't fast enough. The sheer number of androids made it impractical. Chell was busy loading another rocket into the launcher.

"You think I would give you the tool to defeat my androids?" asked GLaDOS. "This isn't another test you know. I don't want you to kill me this time." Red slid The Shredder back into its holster and grabbed the assault rifle instead. She started blasting at the nearest androids. The sheer numbers of androids made it seem like an impossible task.

"You can't win you know." said GLaDOS. "If I was you I'd just give up now and get it over and done with. You're just wasting bullets."

"No." shouted Red. "You're going to pay for what you've done, even if I have to die along with you. You're still going to pay." Red swapped to her shotgun and started taking shots at the advancing androids. This seemed to be working better and she could see a couple of androids falling to pieces amongst the crowd, but there was too many of them. Chell stood up and fired another rocket into GLaDOS.

"I'm not doing anything wrong." said GLaDOS. "I was the one who was locked away against their will. I was even willing to be the bigger person and forgive you but you wouldn't accept it. You're the monsters here. I even made you cake." Red blasted another couple of androids.

"Cake doesn't solve everything GLaDOS." said Chell. "Before you gave me cake you tried to have Red kill me. You've been trying to kill us ever since."

"Red is still going to kill you." said GLaDOS. "She's been lying to you all along. She lied to you when she first met you. Even after she'd got her memories back she lied to you about your mother. She's a compulsive liar. You should kill her now before she kills you."

"I can't believe you have the nerve to call someone a compulsive liar." yelled Red.

"I only lied because of required test protocols. Other than that I've been totally honest with you both." said GLaDOS. Chell fired another rocket at GLaDOS. Her wires sparked and crackled about and pieces of machinery were starting to crack.

"You're both going to die down here!" GLaDOS screamed. "You're going to die here in the depths of this facility and I'm going to be free."

You'll see! You'll never see sunlight again!" Red continued blasting the androids but there was too many. She was running out of shells. Some of the androids appeared to be shutting down as a reaction to GLaDOS's injuries, but there seemed to be more and more climbing into their places.

"GLaDOS." said Chell. "Just shut up." She fired another rocket at the machine and it all started breaking up. Pieces that hadn't been blown off by the blasts started sparking and then exploded. Red and Chell were knocked back by the explosion, flying into piles of androids, which were shutting down. Chell climbed up.

"Red!" she yelled, pulling off her gasmask and looking out across the wreckage of android parts. "Red, answer me!" There was a cough and Chell ran over to where it came from. She pulled away the android parts. Red was covered in blood. "Red! No! Be okay! I need you!" Chell kneeled down pulled Red's gasmask off, and held her in her arms. "I can't do this without you." she whispered. Red coughed again and spat out a mouthful of blood.

"Don't worry." she coughed. "I'm just a little bruised."

"Thank god." said Chell. She wiped the blood from Red's face. "I can't be alone again."

"You're not alone Chell." Red coughed. "Everything's going to be okay." Chell leant down and they kissed.

"Do you ever get the feeling you've forgotten something?" asked Red as they walked back towards the elevator hand in hand.

"What like, the Combine?" asked Chell.

"No not them." said Red. "We'll sort them out on the way out. I just feel like I've forgotten something important."

"Nevermind." said Chell. "If it's really important then you'll remember it."

9. Out of Beta

Portal: Still Alive

Chapter 9. Out of Beta

Sebastian Gray and Estelle Turner made their final trip from the storage room to the platform. They'd been moving parts for what felt like all day. Groups of androids had arrived soon after the woman in the white jumpsuit had left. Sebastian and Estelle had been told that it was for their own protection from something called the Combine. Ever since the androids had arrived they'd been assembling all the parts on the cargo platform. It had been obvious what it was for a while now, but now it was complete.

"Finally." said the assembled parts, that which was so obviously GLaDOS. "Well done Sebastian and Estelle. I suppose you weren't technically necessary once the androids had arrived but you played a vital role in building this shiny new body for me. If you hadn't been doing the preparations I probably wouldn't be have been ready before

Red and Chell shut down the decoy."

"What now?" asked Sebastian.

"I'm free. I win. I don't get captured by the Combine or killed by Red or Chell and I can leave this place forever and do whatever I want. I can perform science on the world." said GLaDOS. "Oh you mean what next for you. Well unfortunately you know too much, so I'm afraid you'll have to die. Don't worry. It's for the best in the long run." The cargo platform started to rise out of the ship carrying GLaDOS into the outside world as the androids turned on Estelle and Sebastian.

"See." said Sebastian. "I knew we were going to get killed but you insisted that she was telling the truth."

"Oh shut up Sebastian." said Estelle.

End
file.